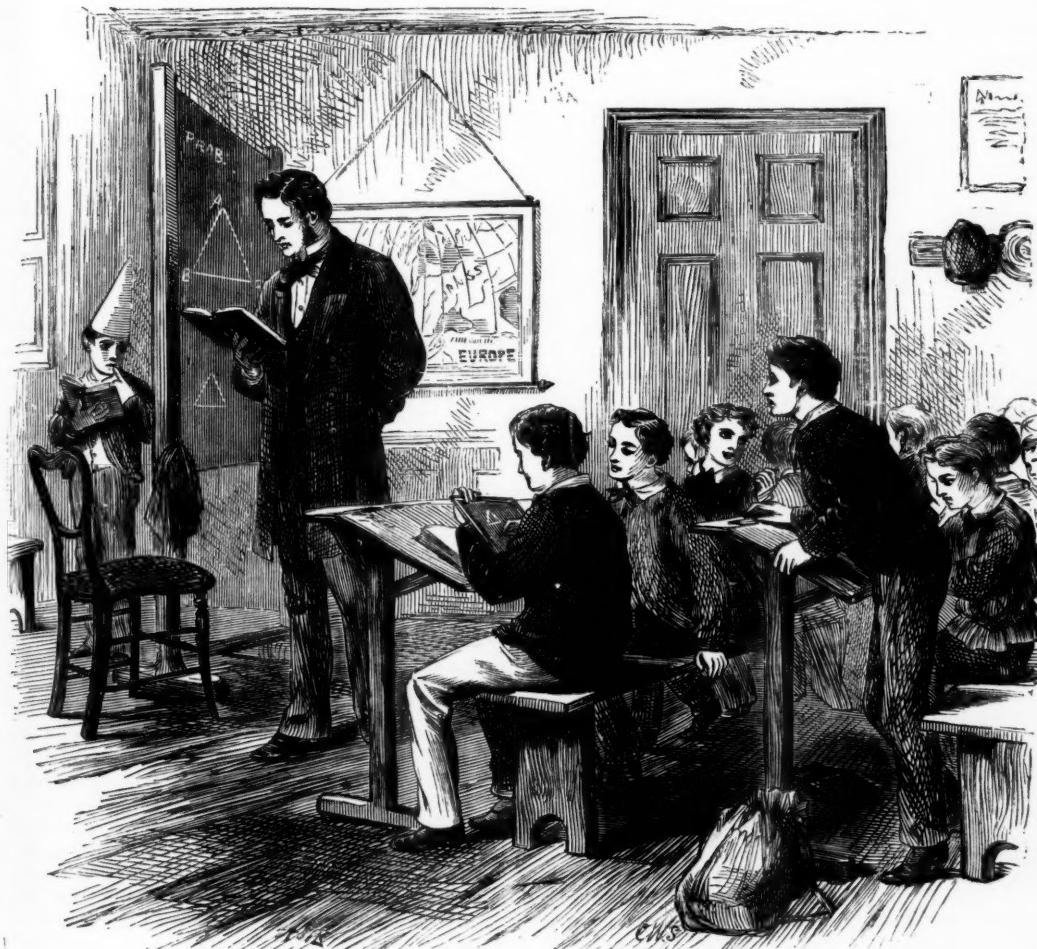


THE LEISURE HOUR.

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Conquer.*



DELIGHTFUL TASK FOR JOHN TINCROFT !

WITHOUT INTENDING IT;

OR, JOHN TINCROFT, BACHELOR AND BENEDICT.

CHAPTER XXX.—MULTUM IN PARVO.

It was true, as Tincroft had said, that on first entering the village that evening, he had taken his way to the rectory, where, to the intense astonishment of Mr. Rubric, he had laid bare his determination to take Sarah Wilson to wife, if she would have him,

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and thus remedy to the extent of his means the trouble he had occasioned.

"Is it possible that I understand you aright? Are you really serious in what you are saying?" ejaculated the rector.

John was perfectly serious, and he said so.

"But only consider, my good friend. Think how this is likely to end. You yourself say that Sarah Wilson is not the person whom, if left to your free choice, you would fix upon as a companion for life;

that in marrying any one at this present time your prospects would be destroyed; that you may have immediately to take your name from the college books, just too when by your final examinations you might obtain your degree; and that you will have to settle down as a broken man (excuse my plain speaking), and go into that precarious occupation, classical teaching, to earn a scanty livelihood. Think of this, Mr. Tincroft."

John had thought of it, he averred.

"And then, again, you have friends to whom you must thenceforth be a stranger—at least, in all probability. To say the least of it, Mr. Richard Grigson and his brother, who are really attached to you, would find it difficult to surmount their prejudices and swallow their disappointment, even should they be disposed to maintain their present relations with you."

"I should take care not to put their friendship to such a trial. I mean, I should take for granted that, henceforth, all intercourse with them must cease," said John, sadly but firmly.

"And you are prepared for this?"

Yes, John was prepared.

"Lastly, though I have hinted this before, you do not expect much future happiness in such an ill-assorted match?"

"I should endeavour to adapt myself to circumstances," said Tincroft. "It is possible, and almost certain, I am afraid, that I am naturally unadapted for wedded life; but since it has come upon me—if it should so prove—I dare say I shall take to it as well as others; and if not perfectly happy myself, I would endeavour to make my partner at least contented with her lot."

"Tincroft, I don't know what to make of you," broke out Mr. Rubric, abruptly.

John smiled faintly. "I often say so to myself," he said.

"But I cannot let you go on in this—pardon my calling it a—wild-goose chase without putting the consequences before you. You remember my telling you of my old college friend and his imprudent marriage, and his subsequent disappointment?"

John smiled again. "Yes, I remember," said he; "and also how you spoke of him as having taken the only honourable course open to him. Now that, as it seems to me, is what I have to do, and leave the event. It may be, poor Sarah will—"

"Decline the honour you are intending her," intimated the rector, seeing that Tincroft hesitated.

"No, no; don't put it so. Decline doing me the honour, if you like."

"Yes, put it in that way; and in that case you will be free. But, to tell you the truth, my opinion is that she will not decline it. But is there no other way of making amends?"

"I think not—I am sure there is not," said John.

Now this conversation, or something like it, took place before the unexpected visit of John Tincroft to High Beech, as recorded in the last chapter, and it ended in John's being invited to return to the rectory, and to sleep there, with a promise on the part of Mr. Rubric to help his friend through the maze in which he was plunged, as far as he could do so with the consent of his own judgment. To tell the truth, Mr. Rubric sympathised to a considerable extent with Tincroft's conscientious desire to do right, regardless of consequences, while he inwardly hoped that his singular and highly eccentric suit might not prosper.

John had little to tell when he returned to the rectory. What that little was the reader is already acquainted with. He had something more decisive to hear when Mr. Rubric returned on the following day from his mission to High Beech.

Yes, Sarah Wilson would accept John Tincroft as her husband. She was so flurried overnight, she explained, that she was not able to give a proper answer then; but now, thanking John very much for his goodness, she would do her best to please him, and try to make him as comfortable as she could when they were married. All this and more Mr. Rubric reported, with a grim smile.

"I was on honour with you, you see, Tincroft," said he. "I promised that neither by word or sign would I attempt to influence Sarah Wilson's decision. Not that it would have been of any use," he added, "for, as was to be expected, she was prepared with her answer."

"Why to be expected?" John asked.

"Well, it was not likely that she would refuse your offer. Her circumstances are very low, if not desperate; and besides that, I am not sure that she has not a real regard for you. Let us hope so, at all events. And then, the providing a home for her mother, as you have promised to do, may have had something to do with her prompt acquiescence in your proposal."

"And now," said John "the sooner we can bring it to a conclusion, the better. I shall go at once and see Sarah, and then return this evening to Oxford to wind up my affairs there, and make a few preparations for a married life."

"My poor friend!" sighed the rector.

"Pray don't pity me," said John, smiling; "you ought to congratulate me."

"So I do—on your possessing such high principle. And you really mean to throw up your appointment?"

"I have no alternative. I cannot go out as a married man."

"Would it not be possible to leave your wife in England," Mr. Rubric had half said; but he checked himself with, "No, of course it would not be. But you will look in at the Manor House before you return to Oxford?"

But Tincroft would not do this. He must submit himself to the consequences of his own act and deed, he said, and he could not expect Mr. Grigson to look upon him in any other light than as a lost man. And as he did not want to be either scorned or pitied, he would leave it to the squire to make any reapproaches. From this determination John was not to be moved, and he accordingly carried out his former programme. There was a hurried walk to High Beech, and a lengthened conference there in the character of an accepted lover, a return to the rectory to luncheon, a solitary tramp to the coaching town, in time for a night mail, and a night journey to Oxford. All this needs not many words.

Nor is much explanation needed to inform the reader of the steps taken by John Tincroft on his return to the university. It is enough to say that before the necessary time had elapsed for the publication of the banns of matrimony in due order, the gownsman's name had been removed from the college books; Mr. Rackstraw had been duly informed that his distant relative had altered his mind, and intended to remain in England; a small cottage near to his friends the Barrys, at Jericho, had been taken by

John, and economically furnished out of the funds still remaining in the hands of his lawyer, who lifted up his hands in silent astonishment when his client put him in possession of the facts of the case.

All this was done by John with a degree of stoicism very wonderful and instructive to behold. He made no boast of his self-sacrifice, neither did he express regret at the abandonment of his former plans and expectations. He was in the path of duty—whether rightly or mistakenly he believed this; and he went forward in it, looking neither to the right hand nor the left.

It was the more consolatory to Tincroft, therefore, as well as a pleasant surprise, when one day—before all his arrangements were quite completed, and before he had finally taken leave of his rooms at Queen's—Tom Grigson broke in upon him with an extraordinary outburst of voice, something like a view-hallo, and caught him by the hand in such a grip that John winced under the infliction.

"John, you are a splendid fellow!" said he.

John did not think so of himself, and he said he did not.

"True greatness is always modest," said Tom; "and, by the way," he added, "that's no discovery of mine, so don't give me credit for it. But, I say, you are a noble fellow; only I want to know why you have kept all this from me, most admirable Crichton!"

"Why should I have troubled—"

"Nonsense about trouble! But I know all about it from Dick. By the way, he has sent me a cheque that will clear Dry's bill; but this isn't what I was going to say. Why, Dick worships you, that's what he does; and he says if you don't keep your wedding at the Manor, he'll never forgive you. And I am to go down and see you turned off—I beg your pardon, John, but you *are* such a fellow, you know; and if we don't have such a picnic of it as was never known before at the old place, it won't be Dick's fault. And I wish you joy, John, and happiness, and success, and all that sort of thing; so there!" And then he wrung Tincroft's hand again, till tears started from his eyes.

"It is very good of you," said John, "and of Mr. Richard; but I would rather the wedding should go off quietly."

But it did not go off quietly. Perhaps, however, one picnic in a story is enough, and it will be sufficient to place on record here that on a certain day in June, years ago, but in less than a year from the date of our first chapter, was married in the parish church of a certain village in Blankshire, John Tincroft, gentleman, of Oxford, to Sarah Wilson, spinster, of the above parish.

CHAPTER XXXI.—FIREWORKS.

YEARS ago there lived in a small house—one of a row of similar tenements, dignified by the name of terrace—in the suburbs of Oxford, known as Jericho, a young married couple who had but few acquaintances in the city, and who probably had no desire to make them. They were poor; their home was scantily furnished, and the only inmate of their dwelling, besides themselves, was an elderly, slatternly woman, who was understood to be the mother of the young wife. They had been married more than a year at the time when we take up their story, and a little weakly blossom of mortality had a short

while before struggled into existence, to the unbounded astonishment of those most immediately concerned in its advent. But as it had soon afterwards made its escape from a world which certainly did not look over-inviting, nothing more need be said on this particular topic.

The husband was a quiet, gentlemanly sort of man, who obtained a scanty enough subsistence, but paid his way notwithstanding, as a teacher of mathematics and classics at one or two boarding-schools in the neighbourhood of Oxford, where his rather shabby costume, his ill-got-up linen, his oddity of manner, and his frequent absences of mind, gave abundant scope for merriment among his pupils. They liked him, notwithstanding, for he was "a good sort of fellow," they said, "and never got a chap into trouble" with the principal.

It was known by the neighbours around—the dwellers in Jericho, I mean—that Mr. Tincroft (for that was the gentleman's name) had been formerly a gownsman of the university; but that, in consequence of his marrying beneath him, he had been obliged to relinquish his prospects, and to take to teaching, which, in their opinion, evidently was something near akin to scavenging; and if he hadn't had "something to fall back upon," they did not see how he could manage to rub along at all. What this something was nobody knew, and, as it was no matter of theirs, they didn't want to know. It being no matter of ours either, we may as well share in their blissful ignorance, only adding that although "under a cloud," it was sagely believed that, some day or other, the object of their contemplation would emerge from his obscurity. "He will be a rich man when he wins his lawsuit" was whispered.

I am rather inclined to think that this whisper about a mysterious lawsuit was intentionally set afloat by a good-natured gownsman (Tincroft's almost only university acquaintance), Tom Grigson by name, who persisted in taking his supper with the Tincrofts at least once a week, and in dragging out the male Tincroft for a constitutional, as he termed it, at all times, seasonable or unseasonable, whenever he was to be found at home.

"You shan't vegetate while I am here, John," said Tom, on one such occasion; "when I am gone you must do as you like, I suppose."

Let me do Tom the justice, moreover, of saying that, like a *preux chevalier*—or, rather, like a true gentleman—he paid all due courtesies to the young wife of his friend. There are different ways of showing such courtesies. Tom chose the right way—he treated poor Sarah as though she were in every particular his equal. He made no condescending efforts to seem at his ease in her society. He placed himself on a right footing by the respect he paid to her.

One summer evening, more than a year, as I have said, after the marriage of John and Sarah, Tom made his appearance at their cottage. John was at home.

"You'll go and see the fireworks, John?" said Tom.

"Fireworks? What?—where?"

"In Christchurch meadow, by the water-side. Haven't you heard about them?"

No, John knew nothing about the fireworks.

"Oh! then I am the first to tell you of them. There's to be a grand display to-night in honour of

somebody, or something or other,—I don't know what."

"Oh!" said Tincroft.

"And you must go and see them, Mrs. Tincroft, too."

"Really," said John, "I don't know. I don't care much for sights, you know; and I dare say Sarah would rather be at home."

"Nonsense. One would think you were too wise to be pleased with anything. I know better—don't you, Mrs. Tincroft?"

"John is always pleased when he sees you, Mr. Grigson," said Sarah.

"I am glad of it. You must persuade him then to go with us to see the sight, for you and I are not too clever to be amused, are we? Come, John, there's a good fellow,—

'Doff your doublet, your best coat put on;
Make haste, or we shall find the sport begun.'

John did as he was bid, and half an hour later the three were on the way to the meadow. Presently, as the darkness increased, the fireworks began to fizz and explode. The display was good, and John was contented with being a spectator. Sarah was delighted, like a child, as in some respects she was. "It was very kind of you to make him come out," said she, turning to Tom, who was by their side. "Oh see! how lovely bright!" she exclaimed, as a brilliant blue light suddenly lighted up the river-side, and the whole of the ground on which the spectators were standing, till all around for a few moments was as clear as in daylight.

At this moment a faint shriek from Sarah roused the attention of her husband. At the same moment Grigson disappeared from their side.

"What is it, Sarah?" John asked, tenderly.

"Oh! nothing, nothing," but she clung closer to John's arm, and asked him to remove a little farther from the fireworks, which somehow dazzled her. Which he did.

Meanwhile Tom Grigson had darted into the thick of the crowd, and laid his hand on the arm of a stranger, a tall pale young man who had been standing not many yards off, and watching, not the fireworks, but Tom's friends and companions.

"Walter Wilson!"

"Mr. Grigson."

"What brings you here?" asked Tom, sternly.

"I am going abroad," answered Walter, submissively; "I can't stop in England, and I am going to Australia. But I didn't think it any harm to have a last look of Sarah before going. I didn't mean any harm," he added.

"I dare say not, Wilson; but after all that has passed, I think you are very unwise."

"I have been a fool from beginning to end," said Walter, impetuously. "I was a fool to listen to what they said at home about Sarah. I was a fool not to listen to what Tincroft would have told me; but I wouldn't hear him. And I am a fool now, I dare say, for coming all this way to ask Sarah's pardon, as I mean to do, for having mistrusted her ever, before going out of the country. But this is what I am come here for."

"Come this way, Wilson, and tell me all about it," said Tom Grigson, more mildly, as he drew the young man from the thickest of the crowd into the more secluded parts of the river-side walk.

Walter's story was soon told. By some means or other, which we need not stay to explain, he had

been convinced of the wrong he had done to his cousin by his unworthy suspicion. Torn with remorse for his unkindness, and indignant with the mischief-mongers who had stepped in between himself and his long-hoped-for happiness, he was seized with serious illness, which for a time threatened first his life and then his reason. From this danger, however, he was rescued mainly by the care and sympathy of his friends, the Burgessess; and eventually recovering, humbled also by the severe discipline he had undergone, he endeavoured to settle down again to business. But the attempt was unsuccessful. The object of life, so far as his future happiness was concerned, was lost; and alienated from his own family, he suddenly resolved to banish himself for ever from the scene of his bitter disappointment. It was at a time when wonderful stories were told of the opening for industry and enterprise in the Australian colonies; and what could he do better than put half the circumference of the world between himself and his lost hopes? He had earned the means for the voyage, and something more, during his business connection with his friend Ralph; and, better than this, he had obtained a practical knowledge of the profession which, above all others, was at that time in request in the strange land of which so much began to be told.

But he must see his cousin before bidding farewell to home—must ask her forgiveness for his cruelty—must be reconciled to his successful rival, and then—

"You must do nothing of the sort, Wilson," said Tom, who had listened to him patiently thus far, and who had witnessed the effect of Walter's unexpected appearance. "But you have not yet explained by what evil chance you came upon us just now."

It was easily explained, Walter said. He knew of his cousin's being in Oxford, and he had journeyed thither from London, where he had already taken his passage, and whence he was to sail on the following week. It was by the merest accident that on this, the very day of his arrival, he had, while wandering through the streets, caught a glimpse of his cousin, her husband, and their friend when on their way to the meadow. Concealing himself from them as he best could, he had followed them, and kept near to them in the increasing dusk of evening, waiting only a favourable opportunity of making himself known.

"Which you have no right to do," said Tom, quietly. "Look here, Walter; you, with your bad temper, and your ridiculous jealousy, and all that sort of thing, have done mischief enough already, and you are not going to do more if I can help it. You have seen your cousin—that's enough for you; and if it is any pleasure for you to know it, she has a good husband, who knows, at any rate, how to behave kindly to her. Now I don't leave you till I see you safe off again to London. So come."

It may be that Tom Grigson used other arguments; but whether he did or not, I am sure of one thing—that a night coach conveyed Walter Wilson back again whence he came before three hours were over, and Oxford saw him no more.

CANDIDATES FOR APPOINTMENTS.

The majority of government appointments are now open to competition. Instead of being dependent upon the favour of Lord This or Captain That for an introduction to some snug post of service, a man has

now to assert practically his qualifications for the duties to be discharged in the situation desired. This being done so as to distinguish him among the crowds of candidates, he has but to provide (to quote the official circular) "satisfactory evidence of age, health, and character," to secure his admission to the public service. There are still some important exceptions, in which the right is reserved to confer appointments directly, without examination; but, in a general sense, the public service is recruited henceforth by "competition wallahs," as they say in India.

It will be easily understood that this new order of things has devolved a large amount of additional work upon the Critical Commissioners, and has made them and their offices in Cannon Row objects of considerable attraction to a large number of Her Majesty's lieges. Whether the Education Office requires a clerk, who must be learned in French and German, if not Latin and Greek, besides all that is included in a solid English education, or the Post Office demands the addition to its staff of a dozen telegraph messengers, each of the candidates must prove their respective qualifications to the satisfaction of the gentlemen of the Critical Commission. The dashing young man, with coat of the latest style, and linen of irreproachable whiteness, fitly corresponding to his delicate fingers, laden with ponderous rings, who is an aspirant for a desk in the Foreign Office; and the big burly fellow, whose bulk and frowning aspect suggest to you a respectful distance as the safest, whose modest desire is to serve his country by keeping its prisoners in subordination, must alike find their way to the examination rooms in Gun Lane, before they can gain the objects of their ambition. Here, on certain days, the most animating, almost exciting, scenes may be witnessed.

For instance, it has become recognised almost with the certainty of a regulation, that on one particular day of the week, boys seeking employment in the Post Office, either as newspaper sorters or telegraph messengers, may present themselves for examination. As the remuneration includes, in the case of the telegraph messengers, a good suit of clothes in addition to a not insignificant sum of money, there are always a number of boys eager for the situations. These are usually accompanied by their fond mothers, who are persuaded (inwardly) that "Johnnie is just the boy to suit," or that "if the gentlemen would only try Billy they would be sure to engage him;" and these good honest women may be seen on the steps of the offices, urging their convictions upon the hall-porters, quite unmindful of the waste of time and space of which they are guilty. When they find that they will be obliged to resign their hopeful sons to the tender mercies of the examiners, they take their places in the forecourt, or on the opposite side of the street, and anxiously wait till the boys have passed through the requisite ordeal, which, from their great numbers, often detains them as much as two hours. A scene of a somewhat different character, yet equally one of interest, occurs upon another day of the week, which, by the *lex non scripta* referred to above, is set apart for the examination of those who wish for temporary employment as "writers" (clerks) in some one of the various government departments. These appointments are open to any person of good character and moderate education, over eighteen years of age, no superior limit being fixed; and although there is an examination

fee of five shillings to be paid (no fee is paid by the Post-office boys), such is the demand for "something to do," that on these days the examination rooms are almost always crowded.

The labours of the gentlemen who are engaged as examiners of these candidates, which otherwise would often be of a very monotonous character, are not unfrequently enlivened by the droll mistakes made in the working out of the very simple papers which are usually set. There is, however, a serious aspect of the subject, as some of the errors committed betray most deplorable deficiency in the average education given in our (so-called) respectable schools, or, at all events, possessed by those who have passed through them.

The simplest scheme of examination is that fixed for the post-office boys, which consist of twenty fac-simile copies of addressed envelopes, in every variety of handwriting, and ten short compound addition sums. The addresses are lithographed on a sheet having double columns, the right-hand column being blank, in which the boy is to insert his own interpretation of the address given. In making copies of these postal addresses some most ludicrous mistakes are committed. *Cornelius Town* is made to do duty for "Camden Town," and *Tb S. Joe S.* for "70 St. Jno. Str." One boy gives *Mr. Chester Esq.* as his most able translation of "Manchester Sq." Some of the boys that thus stumble and blunder in their endeavours to read mixed handwritings, exhibit considerable sharpness in reference to arithmetic, triumphantly handing in their paper of sums in much less than the prescribed fifteen minutes. Others, however, who succeed in correctly deciphering all the addresses, completely fail in their attempts as arithmeticians. A few seem to be enshrouded in hopeless obscurity—beginning their addition from right to left—adding up the three columns of pounds, shillings, and pence thus:—£95 : 22 : 18½—and occasionally declining the terrible task altogether. In such cases, the boys are required to write their refusals on the margins of their papers; the said refusals being put, in two instances, in the following forms respectively:—"can't not duam." "i don't No how to doe These sums."

The merest glance at the boys while under examination will show how thoroughly they realise the novelty of their position. To many of them the whole thing appears a stupendous joke; but some are painfully in earnest. Boys who are resolved to extricate themselves from their present state of poverty and perhaps enforced idleness—before whose eyes are floating visions of bright silver coins of the realm which they may carry home to their mothers week by week, while they are themselves, as wearers of the government uniform, the objects of especial regard on the part of their neighbours and friends—these bestow the utmost pains upon their papers, evincing all the time unmistakable anxiety as to their success, which too often has to be appraised in inverse proportion to the labour and care expended.

Passing from these—certainly the youngest, if not the lowest, class of candidates with which the Critical Commissioners have to deal—we take a peep at some of the doings of the gentlemen who, week by week, are found in "Gun Lane," seeking to qualify themselves for some post (if only a temporary one) in the service of the State. Their examination occupies about four hours, and includes writing from dictation, copying tabular statements, writing out fair copies of hastily

written (*litho.*) drafts of letters, and arithmetic. Generally, candidates for these appointments present a most respectable appearance, and impress the observer with the idea that they are men of tolerable education. Very tolerable, indeed, is the education of some of them, as subsequent facts prove. About one-half are usually rejected for bad spelling, and nearly as large a proportion have shared the same fate on the ground of deficiency in elementary arithmetic. The limits of age, upwards, being (as we have said) removed, we ought, perhaps, to bespeak compassion for those men who, being advanced in years, yet compelled to seek a provision for their declining age, find themselves at a loss in reference to figures; and it is but just to remark that in the new regulation affecting the limits of age, it is also provided that arithmetic shall be regarded as an "optional" subject. No indulgence, however, can be afforded to the candidate who, pleading for it on the score of deafness, wrote at the bottom of a very badly-spelt dictation paper, "I could not here."

The most ordinary words in the English language are cruelly maltreated, even those in everyday use. *Correspondence* is spelt with one *r*; *innocence* with one *n*; *aggression* with one *g*, etc.; candidates frequently striking out the second of these letters in order to correct themselves! *Believe* and *receive* are continually written with the diphthongs reversed; *exercise* with *e* following the *x*, and *excite* without it, and so on. The most ample latitude is given in respect of words which may be spelt in two ways (as honour, honor; criticise, criticize; expense, expence, etc.); but the same allowance cannot be made when analysis is spelt *annalissers*, and analogy, *annallergy*. In a single paper, containing, say thirty or forty lines, a string of orthographical errors like the following may be found:—*testomies*,* *arbinger*, *riguors*, *hypotrical*, *liscencsioness*, *consistant*, *contril*;† also insolent for indolent; soldierly for soldiery; character for characteristic. This last class of error, namely, substituting one word or sentence for another, occupies a distinct position in adjudicating upon the merits of the papers, but it sometimes affords irresistible proofs of the candidate's deficiency in intelligence. For example:—"Secure from enormous assessments" is written by one candidate numbered with the number of *assassination*! although the sentence must have been read to him as distinctly as to the other candidates in the room. The same writer gives uselessness for "usual fickleness," and *desolate legion* for "legal oblivion."

In the lithographed drafts of letters many abbreviations are made, and words interlined, which the candidates are required to extend and arrange in their proper places. Not only are these instructions by many entirely neglected, but by others the most curious interpretations are given to the abbreviated words, in utter disregard of the sense demanded by the context. One of the letters refers to the courts of law and equity, which a candidate renders (whether satirically or not, we are unable to say), "courts of law and *lying*"; and another specifies that certain persons may not leave their posts "except for ill-health," which is copied thus,—"*with a receipt for ill-health*."

It must not be supposed, however, that the educational defects exhibited at the examinations now

more particularly referred to are peculiar to them alone. The same want of completeness in general English knowledge is as manifest among the candidates for higher class appointments, many of which are filled from the ranks of the aristocracy.

Some little commiseration will be felt, perhaps, even for these, when it is stated that their orthographical skill is tested by a paper which is purposely printed incorrect; containing such appalling combinations of letters as the following:—*cimmeclaytton*, *cunsiderashun*, *skepticle*, *ewsize*, *insayshabel*, *jennerosety*, and many others of a like character. But what shall be said of gentlemen, claiming to be the sons of England's nobility, who tell us, in writing of the National Debt, that "the *groth* of that debt impressed many persons with the idea that *reuin* would overtake the nation; while some thought that calamity had *rearily* happened already"? or who express their conviction that "of all men, soldiers should not be actuated by *sworded* motives"?

A specimen or two of original composition, by the same class of candidates, may not inaptly close this paper. In these exercises, of course, some amount of general intelligence is required, as well as mere knowledge of orthography; and both are taken into account in assigning marks to the several productions. About the time when the fatal event occurred, and when the facts were in the minds of all, "The Loss of H.M.S. 'Captain'" was given as a subject for composition. One candidate conceived the strange idea that the loss referred to was not that of a vessel, but of some gallant naval commander in Her Majesty's service, and thus he writes:—"Many are the misfortunes man has to undergo. His last fate is death. Some die by pests and feavers, some by accidents and infirmities; and many whilst lulling away the precious hours on the deck of a fleet ship, while transcending the foaming seas: among whom was our brave undaunted hero, H.M. ship captain. Many were the seas he traversed, many were the storms he braved; little did he think that he the brave hero would lie beneath the foaming waves, and consequently a prey to some carnivorous animal. Yet, after encouraging and exhorting many passengers in their fears on the stormy deep, he terminated his far-famed life in the midst of the serging ocean!"

On another occasion the choice was given of two subjects, viz., "Balloons," or "Some British Manufacture." Being near the commencement of the siege of Paris, the former subject was most in favour; but an example of the performances upon the latter will be sufficient.

The following was by an Irish candidate, who, choosing for his subject a manufacture of his beloved isle, took occasion to say a word on her behalf:—

"What can be more adapted to the preservation of health than *flannel*? And we can have this most valuable article of clothing in such a short time prepared for our use that you might almost live without food from the time it's taken from the sheep until it's placed upon your back. Perhaps you will say it is *cruelty* to deprive the poor sheep of his coat in order to accommodate persons with a luxury. No such thing. If the sheep were not *shiered* they would run a great risk of perishing with heat, also from what is commonly called *flyblows*. And Ireland misses this manufacture, and ever will, until England grants and encourages its promotion."

It is much to be feared that this patriotic interjec-

* Testimonies. † Tranquill.

tion was entirely lost upon the examiners, and that the name of this champion of Erin was afterwards found in the list of rejected candidates.

MASTERS AND MEN.

Most of our readers have heard of Messrs. Ransome, Sims, and Head, the great Quaker firm on the Orwell, which turns out so large a proportion of the agricultural machinery used throughout England, and is always coming to the front with new inventions and appliances, like the road steamer now being so largely ordered for India. This firm, now ninety years old, is remarkable in industrial history for the amity and long-continuance of its relations with its *employés*. The founder, Mr. Ransome, a Quaker, in spite of a hard head and a somewhat despotic temper, had the Quaker habit of consideration for his men, and his little foundry grew amidst difficulties such as one reads of in novels—in one case Mr. Ransome had to pay away his children's bright pennies and little silver to meet the wages of the week—till it grew into one of the first establishments in England, able to turn out at need a regiment of well-drilled, full-grown men. Aided, no doubt, by local circumstances, such as the absence of similar factories in the district and its general poverty—a poverty long since removed—but mainly by the men's sense of the governing tone of the firm, the Ransomes were able on one occasion to tide over a period which was fatal to more than one of their rivals in the trade.

Some thirty-five years ago work was slack, money was scarce, and the firm was compelled to take the men into council, and ask for concessions which in many places would have been the signal for a determined strike. The masters, however, explained their situation frankly, the men entirely believed them, and after a single meeting the whole body agreed to work three-quarters time at reduced wages, that is, in fact, to put up with 12*s.* or 13*s.* in the pound of their usual receipts till better times came round. "That matter rested in my mind," says the present head of the firm, speaking so many years after the occurrence, and doubtless tended to deepen an amity so remarkable that the firm, though noted for the strictness of its discipline, has now 456 hands in its employ whose services average 20 years, 328 who average 25 years, 51 who average 36 years, and 14 who exceed 46 years. In fact, departure has become among the more experienced hands as unusual as dismissal, a fact all the more remarkable because similar works are now in existence all over England, and Messrs. Ransome's men express in their speeches about the Nine-hours movement complete sympathy with their order throughout the country, and are evidently not disposed to surrender any of the advantages generally enjoyed.

Immediately after the termination of the Newcastle strike, the men, more than 900 in number, decided that it would be "discreditable to Ipswich to remain behindhand" in such a reform; but instead of striking, or threatening to strike, they held a meeting in the Lecture Hall, at which doctrines were propounded that would have made a Communist white with rage. One, which would, we fear, be received with little approval even in Northern England, was that it was to the workman's advantage

that his master should get rich,—a statement not indeed made by a workman, but received by them with unanimous applause; another, that "workmen had duties as well as rights;" and a third, that if they were "courteous and reasonable," their employers would in all probability be so too. There was a bit of a fight as to the best hours for beginning and leaving off, but it ended in a unanimous decision to ask for a full half-holiday on Saturday, that is, from noon instead of 2 P.M., and such a reduction on other days as would bring the weekly stint of labour down to fifty-four hours.

A deputation accordingly waited on Messrs. Ransome with the men's request, and were, it seems, not only told that it would be granted, but that it was granted with pleasure, as a partial repayment of the ancient obligation conferred by the hands upon the firm. So touched were the men by this reception, and the instant concession of their demand, that they could not be content without some public exhibition of their feeling, and accordingly resolved to present their employers with an address at a public *soirée*. The address, a most simple, straightforward affair, remarkable only for its clear assertion that prosperity is a blessing to be prayed for instead of a snare to be avoided, was accordingly presented, and received by the partners in speeches which are really an echo of the men's, a distinct avowal that a short stint of daily labour is a good thing, good for the masters as well as the men, and one that in the end will cost nothing. There was none of that reticence and caution with which most employers think it expedient to temper any concession whatever. We do not observe in the very minute report of the speeches before us a single regret over the good old times when men worked from sunrise till they were too tired for anything but bed, while the manager of the Orwell Works, not a partner, repudiated in the strongest language the idea of making up the lost time by driving. He "wanted more brain-oil put into their work, and not more elbow-grease;" to see them all become workmen, instead of merely working-men. Nobody made the blunder of hinting that the men would misspend the new leisure; and the partners, with a touch of the true courtesy so often wanting in these struggles, insisted that the head of the workmen's committee—the "leader of the revolt," as they would say in Belgium or France—should take precedence of the gentlemen, and be chairman of the occasion.

We have given this little incident a prominent place in our columns for two reasons. One is, that we gravely believe this Nine-hours movement to be one of the most important that has ever occurred in the long strife of Labour and Capital, and its success of the brightest omen for the future adjustment of their relations. Masters and men have shown more common sense than they have displayed for a century, and the effect of the reform in removing bitterness will be immense, for although some of the men still argue that wages are more important than leisure, and some of the masters still allege that reduction of hours is only a phrase for increase of pay, there can be no doubt that the old hours, the long monotony of toil, the almost total absence of leisure *in the sunlight*, embittered workmen's tempers, and left that sense of inconsiderate treatment, or, to speak plainly, of cruelty, which makes obedience so hard. And the second reason is this. We have been profoundly impressed in all full accounts of strikes, whether

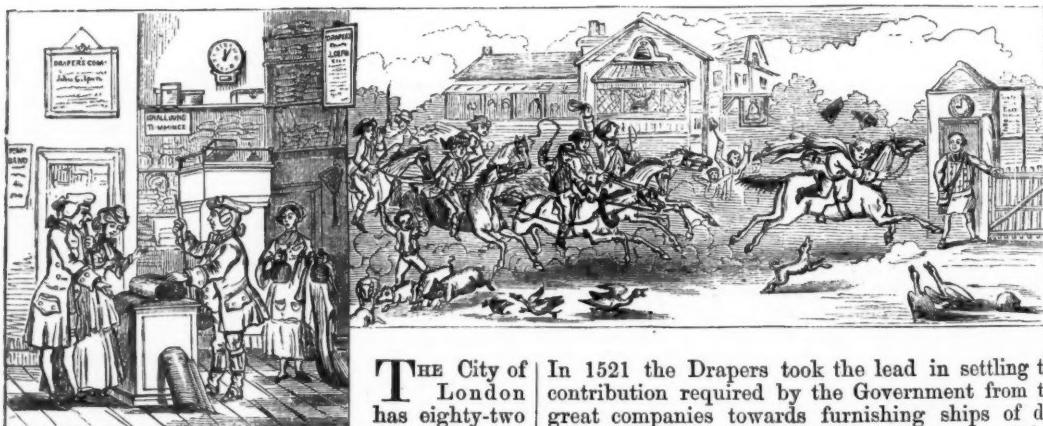
THE DRAPERS' SONG.

English or Continental, with what seems to us the almost undue effect of personal courtesy from employers. Our readers may remember how a fancied slight embittered the struggle between the workmen and the directors of the South-Eastern Railway, and we never take up an account of a dispute which ended amicably without reading some acknowledgment by the workmen of the "kindness" or "fairness" or "consideration" with which their deputations were received. There is a sense of surprise, of pleased astonishment in some of these acknowledgments, which suggests thoughts at once melancholy and pleasant,—melancholy because the surprise shows how deep the social chasm still is, pleasant because it reveals a method of avoiding, if not the struggle itself, at least some of its bitterness. The grand social difficulty of the Continent, the kind of hatred, as of aristocrats for levellers, entertained by employers for their men—a hatred due, we imagine, to concealed fear, and occasionally expressed with brutal insolence—has never troubled us here much; but even in England a little more courtesy, a little more of the feeling which makes all Mussulmans courteous because

every man is a "creature of the Almighty," would seriously modify the tone of our social struggles. If all workmen in England were so treated that they thought it a pleasant thing to see the masters grow rich, as Messrs. Ransome's men said they did, the International might whistle up the storm till it fainted for want of breath.

Such is the account given in the "Spectator" newspaper of what it calls "A Pleasant Incident at Ipswich." It is all the more pleasant from the contrast with the disastrous strike at Newcastle. If that dispute had been left in the hands of considerate and conciliatory employers, such as knew the feelings and wants of the working classes, masters and men would soon have come to a good understanding. As it happened, the management of the affair was allowed to drift into the management of "committees" and agents, and a settlement was reached only after the loss of nearly a quarter of a million sterling. With such experience, we may congratulate Messrs. Ransome and their workmen on the rational and happy conclusion of their friendly discussion, and hope it may be an example in all disputes between masters and men.

THE DRAPERS' SONG.



THE City of London has eighty-two incorporated guilds or Companies, among which twelve are distinguished as "the great City companies." These are, in the order of precedence: 1, the Mercers; 2, the Grocers; 3, the Drapers; 4, the Fishmongers; 5, the Goldsmiths; 6, the Skinners; 7, the Merchant Taylors; 8, the Haberdashers; 9, the Salters; 10, the Ironmongers; 11, the Vintners; 12, the Clothworkers.

The Drapers' Company was founded in 1322, and incorporated in 1364; and again more formally by Henry VI in 1439. It must have existed, however, from a much earlier date, if it be true, as claimed, that it supplied the first Lord Mayor of London, H. Fitzalwyn, in 1190, who is said to have bequeathed his lands to the Company. They possess several original charters, and they claim to have given more Lord Mayors to the City than any other company. Their grant of arms, in 1439, is the only document of its kind of so early a date. The Drapers' grant is kept at the British Museum, and contains historical notices of the Company, and the books continue its history for above two centuries.

In 1521 the Drapers took the lead in settling the contribution required by the Government from the great companies towards furnishing ships of discovery under the command of Sebastian Cabot. Various other important services they have rendered in the national annals.

In the reign of Edward III the Company had "the drapers' ell" granted to them, the standard of measure for the cloth sold at Bartholomew and Southwark Fairs; it bore the name of "the yard" and "the Company's standard."

Their Hall in those times was in St. Swithin's Lane, Cannon Street, whither they removed from their earliest hall in Cornhill. The St. Swithin Lane hall is first mentioned in 1405. We read of "the great parlour," of the "high table" of the hall, strewn with rushes after the manner of the age, "the ladies' chamber," and the "checker chamber," all being hung with tapestry. The "ladies' chamber," an apartment still retained by the Company, was for the sole use of the sisters of the guild, in which they had separate dinners instead of mixing with the company in the great hall. The married ladies only, and those of the highest class, used the ladies' chamber, the checker chamber being "for maydens." There are many females free of

the Company, who come on the list to participate in the charities.

The feasts of the Drapers were famed for their splendour in old times. Among the guests usually were many ecclesiastical dignitaries, the Abbot of Tower Hill, the Priors of St. Mary Overy, Christ Church, and St. Bartholomew, and other conventional high officials. The sisters formed part of the company at dinners, and the wives of members, whether enrolled amongst them or not. Among the entertainments were plays acted; an entry at Midsummer, 1514, for payment to "Johan Slye and his company" being perhaps the earliest mention of players as *companies*. Among the rules for "the syttings in ye hall" was, "no brother of the fraternitie to presume to sytte at any table in the hall, till the mayor and the states have washed and be sett at the high table, on payment of iiiis. iiid."

In 1541 the Company settled in Throgmorton Street, in a large mansion built by Thomas Cromwell, master of the king's jewel house, afterwards Earl of Essex. On his attainder the property was purchased by the Drapers and made their Hall. The great Fire of London consumed the Hall, but its course northward here stopped. The Company's property was saved by its being removed to the garden, where it remained under watch seven days and nights (Timbs's "Curiosities of London").

The Hall was rebuilt by Jarman, but again nearly destroyed by fire in 1774, after which it was restored by the brothers Adam, the architects of the Adelphi. Late the hall has been so enlarged and altered as to be fairly said to have been reconstructed, under the direction of Herbert Williams as architect. The new livery hall and reception rooms in Throgmorton Street are very imposing both in size and decoration. These State rooms are indeed among "the sights" of the City. Along each side of the hall is the motto of the Company, "Unto God only be honour and glory." On the north end, "Fear God, love the brotherhood, honour the King," and round the frieze at the opposite end, over each bay, "Learn to do well," "Seek judgment," "Relieve the oppressed," "Judge the oppressed," "Judge the fatherless," and "Plead for the widow."

The court room contains fine old pictures, Mary Queen of Scots, and her son James I at four years of age, painted by Zucchero; George IV, painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence; Nelson, by Sir W. Beechey, and other portraits by eminent masters.

The court dining-room, which is part of the old building, has been renovated throughout, and the ceiling, of the time of Queen Anne, has been redecorated. The centre panel has an appropriate painting of the legend of "the golden fleece."

At the feasts in this room may be heard

THE DRAPERS' SONG.

'Tis now five hundred years and more,
Since Drapers first their Livery bore,
And gained no small renown;
And then their duties were to see
That cloths did with their marks agree,
And all "yard-sticks" a yard should be,
In London's ancient town.

But trade hath since so mighty grown,
And cheating's now so little known,
These duties long have ceased;
While others of more grateful kind,
From Charity, with wealth combined,
In confidence to them assigned,
Have pleasantly increased.

Whole generations come and go,
Successive as old Thames's flow;
While, like its tidal form,
Our ancient Guild unchanged appears,—
And steadfast, through revolving years,
Its faithful course of duty steers,
In sunshine and in storm.

There's something in an ancient name;
There's more in long unsullied fame—
Both are the Drapers' right!
Our Motto tells in whom we trust,
Our Oath enjoins us to be just,
And Custom won't let friendship rust,
As here you see to-night.

The name and fame our fathers gained,
Long be they by our sons maintained!
And long in this Old Hall
May they, like us, harmonious mix;
And, if assailed by "knavish tricks,"
Stand firm, like Aesop's "bundle o' sticks,"
Together one and all!

The Dukes of Chandos, the Earls of Bath and Essex, the Barons Wotton, and other noble and aristocratic families, derive their descent from members of the Drapers' Company. But of all their distinguished members, from Fitzalwyne downwards, no name has so world-wide celebrity as the Draper immortalised by Cowper, John Gilpin.

Many of our readers may not have seen the form of oath taken by the citizens of London and members of the City companies. We use the old term, but a "declaration" is now made in the same terms as the oath of former times.

THE OATH OF EVERY FREEMAN OF THE CITY OF LONDON.

Ye shall swear that ye shall be good and true to our Sovereign Lady Queen Victoria. Obeysant and obedient ye shall be to the Mayor and Ministers of this City: the Franchises and Customs thereof ye shall maintain, and this City keep harmless at that in you is. Ye shall be contributory to all manner of charges within this City, as Summons, Watches, Contributions, Taxes, Tallages, Lot and Scot, and to all other charges, bearing your part as a Freeman ought to do. Ye shall colour no Foreigner's Goods, under or in your name, whereby the Queen or this City might or may lose their customs or advantages. Ye shall take none Apprentice for any less term than for Seven Years, without fraud or deceit; and within the first year ye shall cause him to be enrolled, or else pay such fine as shall reasonably be imposed upon you for omitting the same; and after his term's end, within convenient time (being required) ye shall make him free of this City, if he have well and truly served you. Ye shall also keep the Queen's Peace in your own person. Ye shall know no gatherings, conventicles, nor conspiracies made against the Queen's Peace, but ye shall warn the Mayor thereof, or let it to your power. All these points and articles ye shall well and truly keep, according to the laws and customs of this City, to your power: So God you help.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.

THE OATH OF EVERY FREEMAN OF THE COMPANY OF DRAPERS, LONDON.

You shall sincerely promise and swear, That you will be faithful, and bear true Allegiance to her Majesty Queen Victoria, her Heirs and Successors. You shall be faithful and loving to the Guild or Fraternity of the Drapers of London. You shall obey all manner of Summons of the Master and Wardens of the said Guild or Fraternity, by them, or their Officers, for the Time being, or else you shall pay the Pains and Americaments ordained therefore. You shall be Comptitioner, and to your Power bear all manner of Costs and Charges, of the said Guild or Fraternity: the Counsels of the said Guild or Fraternity, honest and lawful, you shall conceal and keep Privy, and to all Causes and Matters, for the Weal and Worship of the said Guild or Fraternity, when you shall be summoned thereunto, you shall give your best Advice and Counsel: And if you know anything, at any Time, which shall be slanderous or hurtful to any of the said Guild or Fraternity,

to your Power you shall lett it; or else the Master, or one of the Wardens, you shall warn thereof, or do to be warned. You shall also conceal and keep privy the reasonable Counsels of your Master that you serve, or have served; and all the lawful Rules and Ordinances made, or in Time coming to be made, by the discreet Counsel of the said Guild or Fraternity, you shall well and truly, to your Power, observe and keep; or being convict thereof, by your Default, you shall pay the Pains and Americaments ordained therefore, upon Demand thereof made by the Master or Wardens of the said Guild or Fraternity. So help you God.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.

The Drapers' Company have almshouses, a very good and well-endowed school, large estates, and are trustees of numerous beneficent bequests. May the spirit of their motto, and of the sacred texts emblazoned on their hall, long be influential, and may the Drapers' Company continue to flourish and prosper!

LADIES IN PARLIAMENT.

Not the ladies of high parts and manlike cultivation, with claims corresponding, demanding to rank among the senators and legislators of the country; oh, no! the parliament of which we are thinking was composed of simple folk; not one member was sworn to any leader in politics, nor could be charged with bribery and corruption in getting a seat.

It was a parliament that sat about fifty years ago; it was bound together by the bands of "fraternity, equality, and liberty." Sometimes the liberty was stretched to over-licence in the debates, which is less to be wondered at as all the "fraters" but one were sisters, and all had an "equal" right to talk, and all were "speakers" (and some very fluent ones), no one being elected to any chair of control that might keep the rest in order.

It was in our old town, more than a hundred miles away, that we had when we were young the privilege of knowing the worthy members of this council; and we look back with affectionate interest on those days, and the people, many of them quite originals in their way, that flourished there and then. There was a row of five houses in the most genteel part of the town (*then*—but now, like the old-fashioned squares in London, which have given way to more aristocratic regions, it has lost its caste and is quite mediocre)—houses all so exactly resembling each other, that nobody living in one of them could say "there's no place like home" without being flatly contradicted by his next door neighbour. Even to the knockers on the doors they were the same; they were three stories high, with garrets, long gardens behind, and windows which were counted very handsome then, for the huge four-square clear glazing that now ornaments every suburban villa of the least possible pretensions was not then known even in the mansions of the greatest. The members of "our parliament" were, beyond compare, the "greatest" in our town, but outward signs of greatness were on a very different scale fifty years ago from what they now are.

These five houses were called (*sub rosa*, you understand) by the wits and young ladies of the town "Parliament Row;" and now for the inmates.

No. 1 was inhabited by a sleek and comely widow, who had contracted the habit of sighing without any particular reason for it. She looked as if life had gone as easily with her as it does with most, but

whether "her trouble," by which term she always adverted to the loss of her husband, had given her a chronic turn for melancholy, or whether it was (as the other parliamentary members affirmed) "only a way she had," she could "make up a face" (another parliamentary description) and tune her voice to the dismal at a moment's notice. This was Mrs. Thomas Biggins.

No. 2 had for mistresses three sisters, and for characters they were perhaps the pick of the row. The eldest was very old, the second not much younger, and the third so little behind her that she went for "an old lady" everywhere but at home. They were not people to depart from customs, good or bad. They had been accustomed to look on "Miss Tabby" as "the baby," and to call her so for many years. And when they were driven by facts too powerful to be resisted from that habit, they still looked on her as young, requiring their superior age and experience to guide and protect her, and she submitted to their restraints and prudent counsels with an antiquated skittishness which confirmed them in their mistake. Good, kind, benevolent creatures they were, liberal of their liberal means, imposed on by the idle of course, a fact often lamented over by Widow Biggins as she watched the servile beggars bowing their thanks over their well-filled baskets and bundles at the door. It made Mrs. Biggins sigh to think her worthy neighbours should be so "sadly too easy;" she was grieved for them, for the sin incurred by the hypocritical beggars, and for the injury done to society; but these things she merely lamented to No. 3, No. 4, and No. 5, as she got opportunity; she did not speak of it at No. 2. Miss Tabby, who was the representative of youth and its indiscretions there, would have told her it was better to be "sadly too easy" than "sadly too hard," which No. 2, No. 3, No. 4, and No. 5 concurred in agreeing that the Widow Biggins was; and they whispered under their breath when she was not "in the house," and they had "met," that the most tender-hearted sighs would be a poor dinner for the hungry, and that supposing they were cheated by three out of five, two at least were fed honestly, and that was better than sending them all hungry away, as they were "sorry to see done—" Here they stopped, for it was a rule of parliament never to be personal; so as soon as an individual or his fault was sufficiently indicated, the attack ceased.

No. 3 held in some respects a pre-eminence in the row and in the parliament, because it was inhabited by a man. There lived Mr. Timothy Blinks, with his niece Penelope; he was not in every respect a satisfactory representative of the sex. Miss Grig, who lived at No. 4, and had a turn for mathematics and the masculine sciences, also for satire, called him, when he fell under her censures, "a nose of wax," a term which she had learned from the study of speeches made in the British Parliament and at political meetings, a term she was very proud of, and used with great gusto. Mr. Blinks's nose was indeed of a waxen colour, like the rest of his face; his features, like his complexion, were delicate, but not effective as to beauty, being too far from each other, and spread abroad over a large flat face, as if they were not aware of being members of one firm. His hair had nearly bidden him adieu; but he wore powder, which covered what remained, and supplied the place of the departed. He was a most eminently clean-looking man; his waistcoat was always either

of buff or white, and a pink or sky-blue silk under one peeped out with a very pretty effect. Shirt-frills, broad and plaited with careful accuracy, were in vogue then; and Mr. Blinks's were a pattern to all the frills in the empire. Nothing offended him, unless it was a splash from the kennel, or a sprinkling on his new beaver. He bore scoldings, sarcasms, reproaches, and rebuffs with an equanimity which the elder ladies at No. 2 declared to be magnanimous, but which Miss Grig, when she was angry, called "poor spirited," and she declared "*he* didn't feel, as a donkey doesn't feel, because he had a thick skull and tough insensible hide;" and, I am sorry to say, naughty Miss Tabby was led away by her influence to laugh at him with her, but not before her sisters. No. 5 fully appreciated the gentle Timothy. She was a lady of feeble health, living alone; her name was Septima Winnicks. No one took more kindly, compassionately, laboriously, and experimentally to all her complaints than he did; he knew the value of wadding as a wrap for rheumatism; of the innumerable cordials and sedatives for toothache, and every local ache; he was an adept in sick cookery (indeed, he was an undisputed authority on all cookery), and could give half-a-dozen recipes for even the making of toast-and-water. The members never took a drive without consulting him on the weather (excepting Miss Grig, who had also succeeded in making the fallible Tabby sceptical); they liked to have his choice and approbation when they produced at their meetings patterns from Miss Slowgo's new fashions; and Miss Winnick, who spent much time and thought on the construction of her wardrobe with reference to health, declared he had quite "a wonderful gift that way!"

It was seldom that a week passed without two or three of its evenings being spent at one of the five houses by the inhabitants of the other four. Fifty years ago it was not thought necessary by the well-to-do to go to the sea every summer, or to London for the season. Fifty years ago there was no railway, and "going out" was practicable only by the help of a stage-coach, or, by those who could afford it and liked comfort, a post-chaise; therefore these meetings went on through spring, summer, autumn, and winter, year after year, with few breaks, for the facility of providing for it had not made the "want of change" a necessary, as it is considered to be now.

The staple entertainment at these meetings was "conversation," but a rubber at whist was nearly always added. As, when all the eligible members were present, they counted seven (for Miss Winnick was no card-player), two tables were sometimes provided, and Miss Tabby, with a lively air, took "dummy," making mirthful sallies concerning the said "dummy," which, while they procured a sarcastic smile of approbation from Miss Grig, would occasionally make her sisters turn towards her from their table with a serious air of warning—it sometimes even provoked a shake of the head, and a "Tabby!" uttered in gentle expostulation.

Miss Winnick's objection to cards was an offence to Miss Stickle and Miss Myra; it was, they considered, a tacit reflection on cards in the abstract, and they associated her scruple with her dissenting relations and belongings, and felt that they were condemned with all the most worthy of card-players, by her abstaining from them. In fact, when they found that she made a practice of taking out knitting

directly the tables were opened, and shook her head, they fancied solemnly, they regretted much that she had become a member. They had a debate on the subject one evening when Miss Winnick was kept at home by a nervous headache. "Perhaps," said Timothy, "it would be a good plan, and satisfy Miss Winnick, who is too particular, if we put all our winnings into a box for the Christmas Coal Fund; I shall be glad of it then, for I am distributor of tickets, and know well how soon the money goes with coals at the high price they have been of late."

"A mean compromise," said Miss Grig, "and one, Mr. Blinks, that I will not give in to. If cards are wrong, give them up; if not, why try to please a peevish fancy and bolster a deceived imagination up in an error? What I give for coals I will give, what I win at cards I will keep. Your plan seems something of a popish expedient—paying for an indulgence to commit sin." Miss Stickle, who cared nothing for the money part of the question, saw the force of Miss Grig's logic, and offered no support to the proposal. Mrs. Biggins, who played an excellent game, and had an eye to business, did not like to resign what she counted on as paying the expenses handsomely of the evening entertainment when it fell to her share.

"As to cards," said Miss Grig, "I should never play but for the accommodation of others, and I don't think my winnings would be worth much, so I don't speak from any interested motive. If Miss Winnick frowns on us, and pities us for playing, we frown on her, and pity her for not playing—at least, I suppose so; I don't know, myself, that she is not right, and the waste of time, and bad example as to gambling, ought to be considered."

"But," said Timothy, "we never go beyond three-penny points, and as to waste of time, we talk all the while we play!"

A sarcastic laugh from Miss Grig was the reply, and the motion fell to the ground.

In conversation Miss Grig took the lead in all leading matters—politics, literature, philosophy, and science; here she felt that she distanced all the company, and she laid down the law with a decision which the elder ladies of No. 2 and Miss Winnick resented, as being unbecoming when one of the lords of the creation was present; but which was winked at, if not approved of, by Tabby, and hardly seen or felt by the Widow Biggins. Penelope, not having any demonstration that her uncle was aggrieved, did not know that he ought to be, for she was altogether of that material which the enemy had declared him to be a nose of, and was formed as he formed her; thus when he was ruffled, a rare occurrence, she was ruffled, but when he was placid she was serene.

The parliament abstractedly admired Miss Grig; they were proud of her, they believed in her implicitly, except the elders of No. 2, on occasions when she propounded something new in ethics, which sounded to them as heretical, or as dangerously leading to heresy, as Galileo's opinions did in the ears of the orthodox pope and cardinals. They did not like things to be changed—why should things be changed? What they would have said to the electric telegraph and other wonders not then unrolled it is hard to imagine; but it is certain that they were not fair to the improvements that had made civilised life so much more civil during the fifty years before them. They were staunch conservatives, and they trembled with horror and dread at the very hint

of innovation. In vain did Miss Grig enlarge on the fact that they would find England unendurable if they, with their present experiences, were to go back even to the times of the Stuarts; in vain she bade them remember the huts and the blue paint instead of clothes of the Ancient Britons. The warmer she waxed, the more nervous and on the defensive they got; and Mr. Timothy Blinks, who seldom was up in the subject which had provoked the discussion, found it as much as he could do sometimes to smooth matters, by introducing a topic that would turn the current of thought another way. He had much adroitness in this peace-making art; he was a finished gossip; he knew the affairs of all in the town, high, low, gentle and simple; and he could generally hit on a bit of news that would entice even the lofty Miss Grig from her height, and bring her down to join in a consultation with the rest.

A "finished gossip" he was; no one knew better how to offer "a rose" in the shape of a good story without much wounding by thorns. Everything that he thought would pain the hearers or injure the subjects of his news he left out—not a thorn offended.

This was pleasant on principle to Miss Stickle and Miss Myra Stickle, but again Tabby was seduced by Miss Grig to depart from the conservative side to the opposition, and hinted that she thought he took all the spice out of a tale by his way of telling it. Her sisters frowned at her, but in their hearts they did occasionally, in spite of their principles, think so too.

Although "the parliament" presented to the town without the appearance of a firmly united body, one in its sympathies and opinions, there were hidden and unconfessed divisions in it, not sufficient to endanger its dissolution, but enough to shake it occasionally with a rough and threatening shake.

For instance, Miss Winnick was a source of much perplexity to the Stickles (the elders at least, Tabby was on the liberal side and saw no ground for apprehension); Miss Winnick's family were many of them dissenters, some Wesleyans, some Baptists, and others Presbyterians and Independents. This fact was not fully known when she went to live at No. 5; if it had been, it is possible that No. 2 would not have called on her. To them the sin of schism was the one sin they most abhorred after the deadly ones; indeed, they went so far as to think that if a person placed himself out of the pale of the Church (confounding the Church of Christ with the Church of England) he not only threw away the next world, but all that was worth living for in this; he laid himself open to temptations to every breach of the law without having any armour to defend himself in. In this faith they had been brought up, and it had strengthened with years, as most mistakes uncorrected do. Miss Winnick having been once called upon, while her connections were not fully known, it would have been a breach of courtesy that our parliament could not have committed to blackball her afterwards; so with all her objectionable peculiarities and belongings on her head, she was retained a member.

Miss Myra Stickle had held out the longest, and had gravely reminded her sister, though with deference to her superiority, that Tabby's volatile spirits ought to make them careful how they ran any risk of introducing her to a dangerous companion. But she was overcome by Miss Winnick's begging

Mr. Timothy Blinks (who had called on her at once, in the full understanding of all her disabilities, which to him were no disabilities at all) to offer her beautiful Bath chair to Miss Stickle to use while her leg was weak from a sprain.

No unworthy suspicion that the offer came from a desire of favour arose in the minds of the sisters; they were singularly free from suspicion on all points except Miss Grig's new theories and propositions. And it would have been wholly unfounded now, for Miss Winnick little knew that she was on the balance, and it was uncertain whether she was to be "in the house;" and if she had, having plenty to think about and to do with her ailing body and fully occupied mind, she would have been quite content with the alternative. As to Miss Grig, she gave it as her opinion that as Miss Winnick went to church, it was no manner of consequence where her relations went; finishing her speech with a declaration that families were so ramified, so spread abroad, it would be hard to make people answer for their distant cousins. She, for instance, had connections in India, and for aught she knew, there might be Brahmins among them; how did that reflect on her?

Miss Stickle and Miss Myra looked pale and startled at the suggestion, and exchanged ominous upturning of eyes, which the Widow Biggins seeing, sighed at, adding a sorrowful shake of her head; but Mr. Blinks stood, as usual, in the breach, by saying that Miss Grig's remark reminded him of Admiral Breakwater's return from India, which was expected every day, to the great joy of his nephews and nieces, who were all looking to be well provided for. "And glad I am of it," he added, "for poor Mrs. Robins the widow, you know (here Mrs. Biggins sighed as the representative of widows), must be in want of help. I quite enjoy the thoughts of seeing her in a fine new India shawl instead of that she has worn these three years to my knowledge, and the town will be ever so gay with fans and ornaments. Little Bobby Breakwater told me he hoped uncle would bring him a peacock!"

Bobby's humble desire made everybody laugh, and the question of nonconformity dropped through.

The Widow Biggins, who followed the Stickles with a blind devotion in all their "resolutions," was glad from fellow-feeling that Miss Winnick had passed safely and was recognised; she well knew that there had been serious difficulties thrown in the way of her election; her lamented husband had been an eminent tallow-chandler in a neighbouring town, and having amassed a fair property, had left his widow to enjoy it where and how she pleased; so she returned to her native place just in time to secure No. 1 in "Parliament Row," which had been not long vacated. The question of calling on her had been the subject of lively debate, but Miss Stickle remarked, that "there were occasions when trade was no disqualification for society; as, for instance, Mr. Stock, on the Parade, who was well known to be a retired linendraper, but was visited by all the *élite* in the town, the parliament setting the example." Myra put in an objection to this statement, to the effect that Mr. Stock's father was a man of family who had done what many men of family had done, left his eldest son the estate, brought up his second son to the Church, that he might take the living of which the patronage was in the family, and made his remaining son a tradesman. "Now," continued

Myra, "nobody knows who or what Mr. Biggins's father was." Here the good-natured Timothy interposed, remarking, that since the Biggins origin was in oblivion, it would be well to leave it there, to hope the best of his antecedents, and to give the poor widow the benefit of any existing doubts as to his gentle blood. "She is a very quiet woman, plays a good rubber, and will make a comfortable neighbour; if we cut her, she may leave the house, and we may get some unruly family of children: who knows?" This, his concluding argument, sealed the business, and she was called on in form and duly admitted a member.

There were some stirring subjects agitating the public mind in that day; Napoleon Buonaparte had left the world in which he had made such changes, dying a captive at St. Helena. The parliament took different views of his case and character. To the Widow Biggins he was simply "Old Bony," a name to scare babies with; she had never given a moment's consideration as to what he was or what he did; if he had invaded England, and his troops had pillaged the town, and tapped her gooseberry wine, or taken her tongues out of pickle, she would have felt strongly about him; but what went on out of England was too far off to be realised by her, so she gave only her ordinary sigh when she heard that he was dead. The Stickles (Miss and Miss Myra) thought there should be a public thanksgiving day that the world was safely rid of him. Miss Grig declared there were two sides to every question; that earthquakes and hurricanes, frightful as they were, were not without their beneficial results, and "the great though dark and mysteriously terrible heart that had ceased to beat had but fulfilled its mission!" Tabby nodded approval to this (behind Myra's back), but her sisters were more than ordinarily troubled by such strange language and sentiments. Timothy gently remarked, that though war was one of the evil things that must be, he was always glad of peace, and reminded Miss Grig that hearts were trumps.

Then there was Queen Caroline's visit to England, her fruitless attempts to be crowned, her death and funeral. On this subject Miss Stickle and Myra thought it incorrect for ladies to speak, and they always drew in their lips and looked across the room into vacancy when Miss Grig forced the subject on the attention of the members. Miss Winnick, who was of a very compassionate nature, expressed much sorrow for the sufferings the poor thing must have undergone, and declared that no common constitution—certainly not a feeble one like hers—could have endured them. Miss Grig was a thorough "queenite," and it was sometimes more than Myra could bear to hear her defend, vindicate, sympathise with, and even admire the courage and spirit of "the injured princess," as she styled her. "Well, she's dead now: pity that folks, if they must quarrel, can't keep the quarrel to themselves, and not set the world fighting with them." This was Timothy's public sentiment; in private he agreed with the Stickles that she deserved what she got, and also he allowed to Miss Grig and Tabby that there were faults on both sides, and she was much to be pitied: while he had a long quiet talk with Miss Winnick on the misery that sin makes among high and low, rich and poor, and how good it is to be kept out of temptation.

Not a thing of public or private interest escaped the discussion of our parliament; but we will not

wear the reader with more. Perhaps, dear reader, you may have old familiar scenes and faces to look back upon such as these we have sketched; and if so, you will understand our pleasure in reverting to the past, and making it live again in all the pleasantry it possessed, while the defects that marred it in its day have fallen through, memory kindly and affectionately refusing to entertain them.

THIRTY YEARS OF THE REIGN OF VICTORIA.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS BY JOHN TIMBS.

IV.

THE marriage of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert was the most festive national event of the year 1840; and never was royal union celebrated under brighter auspices. Nearly eighty years had elapsed since the marriage of a sovereign had been celebrated in this country, when on September 7, 1761, King George III was united to Queen Charlotte; but this marriage was a matter of policy, the King having sacrificed a private attachment to what were deemed considerations of mere expediency. The union I am about to chronicle was one of sincere affection, and was interesting not only to the illustrious parties concerned, but to the country whose future destinies were intimately bound up with the happiness of her Majesty in her domestic relations. It was truly a national event—of the fulness of its joy all partook; and all throughout the country, on that memorable occasion,

"Went merry as a marriage bell."

On November 24, in the previous year, in the words of the chronicle, the Queen assembled the Privy Council, and announced her intention of marrying Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. Then came the opportunity presented by the Duke of Wellington's inquiry in the House of Lords as to the antecedents of the Prince, and the auspicious response.

Prince Albert was born, August 26, 1819, at the Castle of Rosenau, where he was educated under his father's supervision. He entered the University of Bonn, in 1837, as a student of jurisprudence. A small house, behind some trees on one side of the cathedral at Bonn, is shown as the residence of the Prince during his university course; and here it was his custom to rise at six in the morning, and, with the interval of three hours for dinner and recreation, to pursue his studies until seven in the evening. I remember it was my duty, as well as pleasure, to inspect a series of views, sketched by the Prince in his youth—as Rosenau (his birthplace), the house in which he studied, his college, his palaces, and other localities of his early years—such as bespeak a cultivated mind. Prince Albert took his leave of the university at the close of the summer half-year of 1838. In July of the same year, the prince, with his father and brother, visited England, and were present at the coronation of our beloved Queen. The Duke and the Prince, it was remarked, remained at Windsor and in London longer than the guests of higher rank. On leaving England the Prince went on a tour through Bavaria and Italy. At Michaelmas the Prince returned to Coburg, having, it was understood, for the first time made the acquaintance of her Majesty.

After his departure, rumour was busy in England in pointing to Prince Albert as her Majesty's future consort, and although the report was contradicted by the ministerial newspapers, the belief was strengthened by a journey in England made about this time by Leopold King of the Belgians, and the subsequent arrival in this country of the young Prince himself, during the autumn of 1839. Immediately after his departure, the Queen caused her Privy Council to be summoned, as already stated; and on the announcement of her Majesty's intention in the House of Lords, the Duke of Cambridge spoke from his personal knowledge of Prince Albert, and confidently predicted his future high popularity.

The ceremony was appointed to take place on February 10, at the Chapel Royal, St. James's, which is supposed to be the same building that was used when St. James's Palace was first founded as a hospital. It was much enlarged in 1836. Hitherto royal marriages had been solemnised in the evening; probably from the circumstance of artificial light adding extrinsic splendour to the pageantry of the ceremony. The Princess Charlotte and Prince Leopold were married on May 2, 1816, at nine o'clock in the evening, at Carlton House. Waiving this precedent, it was resolved to celebrate the marriage of Queen Victoria at noon, probably in consideration of this affording a much greater number of her Majesty's loyal subjects an opportunity of witnessing a portion of the procession. The ceremony, of course, was a much less public one than the coronation, and much less gorgeous one, in its accessory details; but by a privileged few who were present in the chapel it is described as more deeply interesting and picturesque in its general effect. The announcement drew into London many thousands of persons at daybreak, on February 10; the point of attraction being the Mall of St. James's Park, through which her Majesty was to pass from Buckingham Palace to St. James's, in the chapel of which latter palace the solemnisation was to take place. Never did St. James's Park present such an immense multitude assembled there since the rejoicing at the visit of the Allied Sovereigns in 1814. At nine o'clock the crowd between the palaces was very considerable, and at eleven o'clock the pressure was distressing; the carriage-way being with great difficulty kept open by Horse Guards and the police, from the Marble Arch of Buckingham Palace to the garden entrance of St. James's Palace.

The ladies of her Majesty's suite, and gentlemen composing the suites of Prince Albert and of his father, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, were first conveyed in carriage to St. James's Palace, there to be in readiness to receive the royal bride and bridegroom. The latter next left Buckingham Palace. The Prince wore the uniform of a British field-marshal, with no other decoration than the insignia of the Order of the Garter, viz., the collar surmounted with two white rosettes on the shoulders, with the George appended, set in precious stones; and the Garter itself, embroidered in diamonds, round his knee. The prince carried in his hand a Bible bound in green velvet, and was supported on one side by his father, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, and on the other by his brother, Prince Ernest. They were preceded by drums and trumpets and officers of her Majesty's household.

On his entering the chapel, the bridegroom took his place at the altar. Throughout his passage until he entered the sacred precincts, he was greeted with

the hearty cheering with which Englishmen welcome a foreign guest about to become domesticated among them—the men clapping their hands, and the ladies waving their handkerchiefs, and smiling with evident interest and delight. On descending the grand staircase, the Prince, with his father and brother, entered the carriage amid the sound of trumpets and lowering of colours, the presenting of arms, and all the honours paid to the Queen herself; the escort being a squadron of Life Guards.

On the return of the Lord Chamberlain from St. James's, the Queen left her apartments, leaning on the arm of the Earl of Uxbridge, as Lord Chamberlain, supported by the Duchess of Kent, followed by a page of honour, and preceded by the Earl of Belfast, the Earl of Surrey, Lord Torrington, the Earl of Albemarle, and several other officers of the household.

Her Majesty carried her train over her arm. The royal bride was greeted with loud acclamations on descending from the Grand Hall, but her eye was bent principally on the ground. Her Majesty wore no diamonds on her head, but a simple wreath of orange blossoms. The magnificent veil did not cover her face, but hung down on each shoulder. A pair of very large diamond ear-rings, a diamond necklace, and the insignia of the Order of the Garter, were the principal ornaments worn by the Queen. The Duchess of Kent and the Duchess of Sutherland rode in the same carriage with her Majesty, and the royal *cortège* left the palace at a slow pace, under a strong escort of the household cavalry. The Queen's carriage was preceded by six others, conveying the officers of her household; and each carriage was drawn by two horses only, without the rich State caparisoning. Her Majesty was enthusiastically cheered, and graciously acknowledged the loyalty of her people, but her countenance was extremely pale, and betokened considerable anxiety.

The Queen, upon her arrival at St. James's Palace, was conducted to her closet, behind the throne-room, attended by her maids of honour and train-bearers. The Lord-Chamberlain, preceded by drums and trumpets, then returned to the throne-room, to attend her Majesty to the chapel; in the course of a few minutes, the doors again opened, and amidst the performance of the National Anthem, the Queen, attended by twelve bridesmaids, the *élite* of the beauty of the day, and a splendid procession of all the officers of the Court, entered the chapel and advanced through the ball-room (or Queen Anne's drawing-room), the guard or armoury room, thence into the vestibule, and from that down the grand staircase, through the colonnade, in the colour quadrangle, leading into the chapel, where, as well as in the apartments through which the procession passed, were erected seats for about 1,760 visitors, the cost of which was £9,226.* The greater portion of the company consisted of elegantly-dressed ladies; colours, light-blue and green, relieved with white, amber, crimson, purple, fawn, stone, and a considerable number of white robes. Each lady wore a wedding favour of white satin ribbon, mixed with silver lace and orange blossoms.

The ceremony proceeded according to the accustomed ritual, the Queen pronouncing what was required of her in it in an audible manner, with a voice remarkable for brilliancy and musical tone. The Duke

* These fittings, undisturbed, were subsequently visited by 50,000 of the public, who passed through the chapel at the rate of fifty per minute.

of Sussex gave away the royal bride, and exactly at a quarter to one o'clock the pealing of the guns in the park announced that at that moment the happy bridegroom had placed the ring upon the finger of the bride. The remaining benedictions having been pronounced, the Queen shook hands cordially with the members of the royal family present; amongst whom, with a marked affection, the Queen Dowager Adelaide had watched the proceedings throughout with the interests of a mother. Prince Albert also kissed the Queen Dowager's hand, and acknowledged her congratulations.

At a few minutes past one o'clock the procession began to remarshal itself for its return, in the same order as before, save that the Queen walked hand in hand with her royal husband, who placed her Majesty's hand in his own, so as to display the wedding ring, which appeared more massive than such rings are usually made.

The Queen next proceeded to the throne-room, where her Majesty and Prince Albert signed the marriage register, which was attested by certain members of the royal family and officers of State, the book being signed upon a handsome table prepared for the purpose. This signing was one of the most noteworthy incidents of the day. Certain journalists enjoyed a glimpse of the attestation through the folding doors of the throne-room.

Before two o'clock, the last carriage, in which rode the Prince and the Queen, attended by the Duchess of Sutherland, had reached Buckingham Palace. The Prince assisted her Majesty to alight; and the royal bride entered her own hall, with an open and joyous countenance, slightly flushed, and in the most smiling and condescending manner acknowledging the loud and cordial cheers which rang through the apartment. The whole party, shortly after, partook of a sumptuous *déjeuner* at the Palace; the centre of the table being occupied by a magnificent cake, three yards in circumference, about fourteen inches in thickness, and weighing nearly 300lb.—the manufacture of the yeoman confectioner of the royal household. It was surmounted by the figure of Britannia, blessing the illustrious bride and bridegroom, the figures being nearly a foot in height. On the top of the cake were bouquets of white flowers intended for presents to the guests at the nuptial breakfast. At its close, the royal pair left the palace for Windsor, amidst the festive acclamations of a vast multitude. The first carriage was occupied only by her Majesty and Prince Albert; both of whom appeared in high spirits, and acknowledged the cheers of the crowd in the park with much earnestness of manner. Four carriages followed, in which were Prince Ernest and the attendants of her Majesty and Prince Albert.

Throughout the road to Windsor, the happy event was variously celebrated. At Kensington, the birthplace of the Queen, an arch of evergreens was erected across the road; the children of the public schools were feasted; and in the evening, the town was illuminated. Similar festive commemorations were prepared at Hammersmith, Brentford, Hounslow, etc. At Eton College was a portico covered with 5,000 lamps, and there sparkled the classic legends "*Gratulatur Etona Victoria et Alberto*," and "*Floreat Etona*," and the 550 Etonians wore bridal favours. A brilliant shower of rockets announced the arrival of the royal party, and at twenty minutes before seven o'clock the royal carriage arrived in the high street. Every house was illuminated, or decorated

with flags, laurels, mottoes, etc.; and the applause was loud and deafening. Within a few minutes, the royal carriage drew up at the grand entrance to the Castle; the Queen was handed from the carriage by the Prince; she immediately took his arm, and entered their magnificent home.

Meanwhile, the metropolis was rife with festivity. At St. James's Palace, a State banquet was given to 100 royal and noble guests and their suites; all the company wearing court dresses, and the knights their insignia. The finest gold plate from the royal collection was piled upon the sideboard; and shields, vases, urns, tankards, and groups were arranged with infinite taste, and illuminated with candelabra, or *bras-de-cheminée*. Here glittered many an ancient trophy and costly gem, crystal and enamel. At the banquet was served a very fine sturgeon, caught in the River Thames off Greenwich, and sent as a present to her Majesty by the Lord Mayor. At the *déjeuner*, the table bore a wedding cake 200lb. weight. By permission of the lord steward, a transient peep at the wedding banquet of only 100 guests was afforded to a favoured few. At the close of this banquet, the guests went to a magnificent entertainment at Sutherland House, the north front and gardens of which were illuminated. Here, likewise, was a vast and superb presentation cake; and the company were but conveyed from one palace to another. The Queen Dowager entertained certain members of the royal family; the ministers gave full-dress dinners; the societies of the Inns of Court feasted in their noble hall; the clubs in their palatial mansions; and in every grade of society there was festal celebration. At a tannery in Bermondsey nearly 400 persons were feasted with an ox roasted whole, a plum-pudding 163lb. weight, seven butts of ale and porter, and a hogshead of cold punch. The six hundred children of the parochial schools of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields were feasted at the expense of the benevolent Queen Dowager. Throughout the country the day was kept by incorporated or individual generosity as a holiday of the olden time, but happily with a holier object than any dearly-bought victory, such as has been a common occasion of rejoicing in our time.

The illuminations were very brilliant. Crowns, stars, initials, and devices blazed in every direction. Gas was chiefly used, but some of the public offices and clubs were decorated with myriads of lamps.

The presentation rings were a revival of olden custom on this memorable celebration. Rings were formerly given away in great numbers at weddings. Anthony Wood relates that in 1589, one who was openly profuse, beyond the limits of a sober philosopher, did give away, in gold-wire rings (or rings twisted with thin gold wires), at the marriage of one of his maid-servants, to the value of £4,000. Upon the present occasion, the Queen followed the above amiable old custom. Mr. Wyon, the chief engraver of her Majesty's seal, was commissioned to execute her likeness in profile, in pure gold, bright upon a mat ground, with the legend, "*Victoria Regina*"; the whole being less than a quarter of an inch in diameter. The Queen was so pleased with this microscopic work of the medallic art, that her Majesty ordered six dozen impressions to be struck, and set by the royal jewellers (Rundell and Bridge) in gold rings, for presentation to distinguished personages. The ring is of fine plain gold, with a lover's knot on each side of the medallion.

Varieties.

THE PLAGUE IN LONDON.—The very Court, which was then gay and luxurious, put on a face of just concern for the public danger. All the plays and interludes which, after the manner of the French court, had been set up, and began to increase among us, were forbidden to be acted; the gaming-tables, public dancing-rooms, and music-houses, which had multiplied, and began to debauch the manners of the people, were shut up and suppressed; and the jack-puddings, merry-andrews, puppet-shows, rope-dancers, and such like doings, which had bewitched the poor common people, shut up their shops, finding, indeed, no trade, for the minds of the people were agitated with other things; and a kind of sadness and horror at these things sat upon the countenances even of the common people. Death was before their eyes, and everybody began to think of their graves, not of mirth and diversions. But even those wholesome reflections,—which, rightly managed, would have most happily led the people to fall upon their knees, make confession of their sins, and look up to their merciful Saviour for pardon, imploring his compassion on them in such a time of their distress, by which we might have become as a second Nineveh,—had quite a contrary effect on the common people: who, ignorant and stupid in their reflections, as they were brutishly wicked and thoughtless before, were now led by their fright to extremes of folly; and as I have said before, they ran to conjurors and witches, and all sorts of deceivers, to know what should become of them, who fed their fears and kept them always alarmed and awake, on purpose to delude them, and pick their pockets. So, they were as mad upon running after quacks and mountebanks, and every practising old woman, for medicines and remedies; storing themselves with such multitudes of pills, potions, and preservatives, as they were called, that they not only spent their money, but even poisoned themselves beforehand, for fear of the poison of the infection, and prepared their bodies for the Plague, instead of preserving them against it. On the other hand, it is incredible, and scarce to be imagined, how the posts of houses and corners of streets were plastered over with doctors' bills, and papers of ignorant fellows quacking and tampering in physic, inviting the people to come to them for remedies.—*Defoe.*

"DRUNKEN SCOTLAND."—From the parliamentary returns for 1870 we learn that the amount of alcoholic liquors consumed in England and Wales during that year was 11,591,699 gallons, while the amount of beer consumed was 88,944,504, giving a total of 100,536,203, or 4·42 gallons of proof spirits for each inhabitant of England and Wales. Had the beer been made into spirits it would have produced to the revenue £44,472,252; and thus with the £5,795,849 10s. paid as duty on spirits would make a total of £50,268,101 10s., in which case 4s. 3½d. would have been paid by each individual of the population. As, however, the amount of duty paid on malt was but £6,022,234 4s. 11d., giving with the duty on spirits £11,818,133 14s. 11d. to the revenue, the proportion for each individual in England and Wales was 10s. 4½d. During the same period the amount of alcohol consumed in Scotland as spirit was 5,364,008 gallons, and the amount consumed as beer 4,638,560 gallons, making a total of 10,002,563 gallons—2·95 gallons of proof spirit to every inhabitant. Had the beer been converted into spirit it would have produced to the revenue £2,319,280, which, added to the amount paid on spirits, £2,680,001 10s., would have given a total of £5,001,281 10s., equal to £1 9s. 9½d. from each individual. As compared with England, however, the quantity of malt made into beer was so small that it only produced in the shape of duty £314,069 5s. 10d. If this is added to the duty paid on spirits we have a total of £2,996 15s. 10d., showing that each individual paid 17s. 10d. as duty for British-made alcohol. This is 7s. 5d. in excess of the amount paid by England and Wales, but the difference is accounted for in this way: a gallon of proof alcohol in the form of spirit pays seven and one-third times as much duty as the same quantity consumed as beer. This explains the fact of the English paying a smaller proportion of duty on British-made alcohol, although 4·42 gallons is their proportion of consumption per individual as compared with 2·95 gallons for each person in Scotland. In other words, while they pay more, the Scotch drink considerably less than their southern brethren. In 1870 there were granted in England and Wales 283,938 licences for the sale of spirits and beer, viz., one to eighty of the inhabitants, whilst in Scotland only 17,249 licences were granted, one to 195 of the population. [The foregoing paragraph, title included, is from the "Weekly Review." It proves that the Scotch, on the whole,

drink less than the English. The chief advantage of England is that there is more beer and less whisky used. The Scotch national method of taking alcohol is the worst both for health and thrift. In both countries drunkenness is the national scandal and disgrace, and regulation of the liquor traffic is demanded by sound statesmanship as well as Christian philanthropy.]

DIVERSITY OF GIFTS.—The propensity to compare is frequently indulged in foolish and injurious ways. It cuts us to the heart when we hear excellent ministers decried, because they are not like certain others. You cannot logically institute comparisons where they do not hold. Rugged Cephas has his place and order, and he is neither better nor worse, higher nor lower in value, than polished Apollos. No one inquires which is the more useful—a needle or a pin, a spade or a hoe, a wagon or a plough: they are designed for different ends, and answer them well; but they could not exchange places without serious detriment to their usefulness. It is true that A excels in argumentative power; let him argue, then, for he was made on purpose to convince men's reasons; but, because B's style is more expository, do not despise him, for he was sent not to reason, but to teach. If all the members of the mystical body had the same office and gift, what a wretched malformation it would be; it would hardly be so good as that, for it would not be a formation at all. If all ears, mouths, hands, and feet were turned into eyes, who would hear, eat, grasp, or move? A church with a Luther in every pulpit would be all fist; and with a Calvin to fill every pastorate, she would be all skull. Blessed be God for one Robert Hall, but let the man be whipped who tries in his own person to make a second. Rowland Hill is admirable for once, but it is quite as well that the mould was broken.—*Mr. Spurgeon.*

SWORD-FISH.—Your correspondent, the Rev. William Wyatt Gill, B.A., in the course of his very interesting "Notes from the South Pacific," raises a question as to the correct representation of a sword-fish. At p. 56 of the "Leisure Hour" for January I read thus:—"In Mangin's 'Mysteries of the Ocean,' just published, p. 333, is an impossible picture of the *Xiphias gladius*. It represents the *upper jaw only* as being elongated into a sharp sword, the under jaw being quite short like that of an ordinary fish." Premising that there are other species of fish classed as sword-fish besides the *Xiphias gladius*, e.g., the *Istiophorus velifer*, and the *Tetrapturus belone*, I beg to state that having paid a special visit to the Hunterian Museum for this express purpose, I have there inspected several specimens of sword-fishes, all of which show the *ramus*, or sword, as really produced by an elongation of the upper jaw only; and that the lower jaw, in its perfect condition, is found to be quite short and wholly destitute of weapon of any kind. The *ramus* is found to project to nearly three feet in advance of the eye, varying in length according to the size of the specimen. I request that you will kindly allow this correction to come under the notice of your readers; and would add, by way of suggestion to Mr. Gill, that we should all be much indebted to his courtesy if he will forward a perfect specimen of his sword-fish, with a double weapon formed by an equal elongation of both jaws, to the curators; to be added to the treasures now under their care, at the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons in Lincoln's Inn Fields; when perhaps he may, in return, learn its correct scientific designation.—A. HALL.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN AMERICA.—In the United States the President is chosen by "electors," or "electoral colleges," and not directly by the people. Each State is entitled to as many electors as it has representatives in Congress; thus, Pennsylvania, having two Senators and 24 members of the House, is entitled to 26 electoral votes, while Delaware, with two Senators and one member, has three electors. In each State these electors are chosen by the popular vote, with the exception of Florida, where the Legislature chooses them. The consequence is that the predominant party in any State gets the whole number of electors to which that State is entitled, because each voter votes for the whole number; and the minority, no matter how large, are wholly unrepresented. As at present apportioned, the 37 States of the Union are entitled to 317 electoral votes, of which a majority, or 159, will be necessary to choose a President. Under the census of 1870 there will be a new apportionment made by Congress according to the population thereby shown, which will add to the strength of the West, and take away from the Atlantic coast and Southern States.